

Recommendations for Schools and Others on Poor Air Quality Days

Note: All guidelines are cumulative (left to right and top to bottom) as duration and intensity of activities increase

Activity	0 – 50 Good	51 – 100 Moderate	101 – 150 Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	151 – 200 Unhealthy	201 – 300 Very Unhealthy
Recess (15 min)	No Restrictions	No Restrictions	Make indoor space available for children with asthma or other respiratory problems.	Any child who complains of difficulty breathing, or who has asthma or other respiratory problems, should be allowed to play indoors.	Restrict outdoor activities to light to moderate exercise.
P.E. (1 hr)	No Restrictions	No Restrictions	Make indoor space available for children with asthma or other respiratory problems.	Any child who complains of difficulty breathing, or who has asthma or other respiratory problems, should be allowed to play indoors.	Restrict outdoor activities to light to moderate exercise not to exceed one hour.
Scheduled Sporting Events	No Restrictions	Exceptionally sensitive individuals should limit intense activities.	Individuals with asthma or other respiratory/ cardiovascular illness should be medically managing their condition. Increase rest periods and substitutions to lower breathing rates.	Consideration should be given to rescheduling or relocating event.	Event should be rescheduled or relocated.
Athletic Practice & Training (2 – 4 hrs)	No Restrictions	Exceptionally sensitive individuals should limit intense activities	Individuals with asthma or other respiratory/ cardiovascular illness should be medically managing their condition. Increase rest periods and substitutions to lower breathing rates.	Activities over 2 hours should decrease intensity and duration. Add rest breaks or substitutions to lower breathing rates.	Sustained rigorous exercise for more than one hour must be rescheduled, moved indoors or discontinued.



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<http://www.deq.idaho.gov/air/aqindex.cfm>



HOW TO USE THIS CHART

This chart is for restrictions to outdoor activities affected by poor air quality only. It should be used to modify plans for outdoor activities of less than four hours duration, including recess, lunch, and physical education class. Use it in conjunction with air quality forecasts.

The health benefits of regular exercise are well documented. The intent of this chart is to help children continue to exercise while protecting their health when air quality is poor. Even when air quality is poor, exercise can be continued indoors.

Long-term exposure to polluted air can have permanent health effects including decreased lung function, possible development of diseases such as asthma and bronchitis, or a shortened life span.

The Air Quality Index is forecasted each morning and updated in the afternoon during alerts. The forecast can be viewed at <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/air/aqindex.cfm>. Canceling, or rescheduling vigorous outdoor activities to the morning should be considered to decrease the risk of exposure to higher levels of pollutants. Here's an example of how this chart might be used to determine changes to be made for a Friday afternoon Physical Education program:

Step 1: On Thursday afternoon, check the forecast for Friday at <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/air/aqindex.cfm>. While you're there, sign up for email updates, to be notified by e-mail about the latest changes in air quality. The Air Quality Index (AQI) forecast is also available by calling the air quality information line at (208) 373-0313.

Step 2: If the forecast for Friday is Orange or Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups, make arrangements to have indoor space available for children with asthma and other respiratory or cardiovascular problems.

Step 3: On Friday prior to class, check the current AQI. Since ozone or PM 2.5 can vary from one area to another, click on the map for a representation of pollution levels in your area. If the AQI in your area has moved to Moderate, no action is needed. However, if the AQI has moved to Unhealthy, note that even children without respiratory problems may complain of breathing difficulties and they should play indoors as well.

Please note: Before canceling a scheduled outdoor athletic event, call the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality for up-to-date information for your specific location.

* These recommendations assume that most of a child's outdoor exposure occurs while at school or going to and from school. Some children engage in after-school activities (work and/or play) that can increase their daily exposures beyond four hours and should follow the guidance and advice offered by U.S.